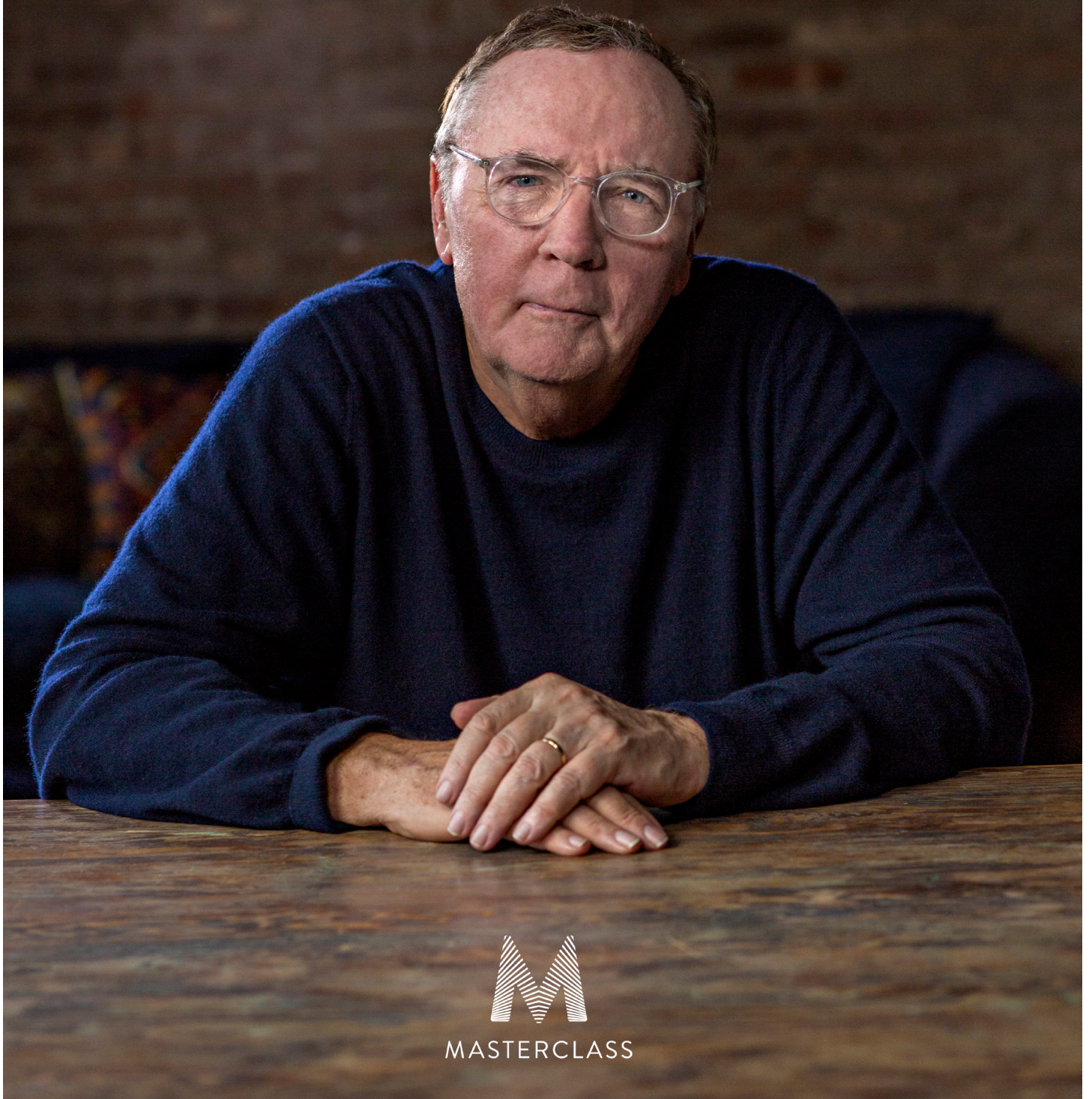


JAMES PATTERSON TEACHES WRITING

CLASS WORKBOOK



MASTERCLASS

WELCOME TO MASTERCLASS

JAMES PATTERSON TEACHES WRITING 1

A FEW FACTS ABOUT JAMES PATTERSON

- ▶ He's currently the best-selling author in the world.
- ▶ He has more #1 children's best-sellers than any living author.
- ▶ His books have sold more than 300 million copies worldwide.
- ▶ James holds the Guinness World Record for being the first person to sell over 1 million eBooks.
- ▶ He has had 19 consecutive No. 1 *New York Times* Best Sellers.
- ▶ His first published novel, *The Thomas Berryman Number*, won the 1977 Edgar Award for Best First Novel.
- ▶ In 2013, James donated \$1 million to help independent bookstores around the US.
- ▶ James has given away over 1 million books to schools and US troops. In 2015 alone, he's giving \$1.5 million to school libraries.

“

I hope that people who take this course will pick up a lot of tricks of the trade. —James Patterson

”



HOW TO USE THIS CLASS

Before you dive in, we have a few recommendations for getting the most out of your experience.

THINGS YOU MIGHT NEED

To enjoy this class you only need your computer and a desire to learn. We've found that some students learn best when using a few other tools, so here's a short list of 'nice-to-haves' to help maximize your learning potential.

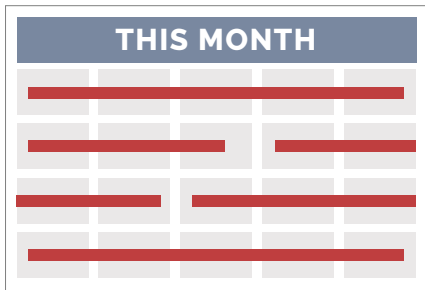


CLASS WORKBOOK

This printable PDF is filled with lesson recaps, writing prompts, and follow-up assignments.

SUGGESTED VIEWING SCHEDULE

James explains his writing style to you in 22 lessons. Much like his best-selling novels, it's tempting to finish all of them in one sitting. We'd like to recommend our suggested viewing schedule, which you'll find on page 4 of this Class Workbook.



PEN OR PENCIL

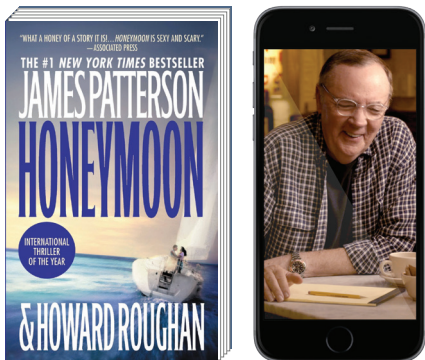
Studies show that students recall more material if they record it with handwritten notes.¹ We've included space for jotting down your thoughts on each page of the Class Workbook.

WEBCAM OR SMARTPHONE

Record and upload questions and comments for James to his Office Hours page [here](#).

A JAMES PATTERSON NOVEL

We recommend *Honeymoon*, which he'll use for examples over the course of the class.



¹ (Kiewra, K. A., DuBois, N. F., Christian, D., McShane, A., Meyerhoffer, M., & Roskelley, D. (1991). Note-taking functions and techniques. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83, 240-245)

ICONS YOU WILL SEE

Here are a few general tips for navigating your way around the class site.



LESSON VIDEOS

Watch and listen to James explain his writing process, one lesson at a time.



INTERACTIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Take advantage of the innovative tools and interactive assignments we've created to enhance your education.



LESSON DISCUSSIONS

Share your works in progress and ask your peers for help and support if you've hit a roadblock.



OFFICE HOURS

Watch James answer questions and critique work submitted by MasterClass students.



COMMUNITY

Continue connecting with your MasterClass peers with our community features.



QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

We want to hear from you!
Email us: support@masterclass.com

LESSON PLAN + SUGGESTED VIEWING SCHEDULE

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
01 INTRODUCTION ▶ Welcome to MasterClass 02 PASSION + HABIT ▶ Keep the passion alive ▶ Love what you do ▶ Believe in yourself ▶ Endure rejection 03 RAW IDEAS ▶ Examples of raw ideas ▶ Where great ideas come from ▶ Try a different approach ▶ Write your ideas down ▶ But is it a book? 04 PLOT ▶ Condense your plot ▶ Raise the stakes ▶ Create conflict ▶ Create worthy opponents ▶ Build in surprises ▶ Less is more	05 RESEARCH ▶ Seek inspiration ▶ Build your credibility ▶ Know your locations ▶ Conduct interviews ▶ Know your vocations ▶ Don't be a know-it-all ▶ No excuses 06 OUTLINES PART 1 ▶ What your outline needs ▶ Focus on the story ▶ Begin sketching your outline ▶ Add more suspense ▶ Edit, edit, edit ▶ Try a character-focused approach ▶ Be thorough 07 OUTLINES PART 2 ▶ Outline from <i>Honeymoon</i> ▶ Troubleshoot your outline ▶ Step back and start writing	08 WRITER'S BLOCK ▶ Freight train through ▶ How James writes ▶ Stay focused ▶ Take a break ▶ Take it seriously ▶ Practice, practice, practice 09 CREATING CHARACTERS ▶ Who is your character? ▶ What makes your character tick? ▶ Make a complex hero ▶ Make a complex villain ▶ Make important secondary characters ▶ Create reader intimacy 10 FIRST LINES ▶ Favorite first lines ▶ Keep pulling the reader in ▶ Get your reader invested ▶ Involve the reader quickly ▶ Don't be afraid to rewrite

WEEK 4

11 WRITING DIALOGUE

- Example of great dialogue
- Heighten reality
- Reveal your characters through dialogue
- Do exposition the right way
- Compress time
- Move the story forward

12 BUILDING A CHAPTER

- Choose a view point
- Example of a great chapter
- Be in the scene
- Find a voice
- Give the reader questions

13 WRITING SUSPENSE

- Know your genre
- Intrigue your reader
- Keep raising the stakes
- Keep the reader guessing
- Don't reveal too much too soon

14 ENDING THE BOOK

- What the ending needs
- Plant seeds along the way
- Favorite book endings
- Don't shy from ambiguity
- Think of alternate endings
- Analyze your favorites
- The secret to great endings

WEEK 5

15 EDITING

- Move the story forward
- Remove the distractions
- Edit the dialogue
- Keep the pages turning
- Stay positive during the edit

16 WORKING WITH CO-AUTHORS

- How to find a great co-author
- When to begin the collaboration
- Make sure they know your voice
- Communication is key
- Encourage and coach them
- Put them in the scene
- Make it a true collaboration

17 GETTING PUBLISHED

- Publishing *The Thomas Berryman Number*
- Find the right agent
- Send query letters
- Don't give up
- Enjoy the victories

18 BOOK TITLES AND COVERS

- Favorite titles and covers

WEEK 6

19 MARKETING THE PATTERSON WAY

- Brand yourself
- Create a tagline
- Advertise
- Use social media
- Push your publisher

20 HOLLYWOOD

- How it starts
- How it works
- *Kiss The Girls*
- *Alex Cross*
- *The Simpsons*
- Have a sense of humor

21 PERSONAL STORY

- Where it all started
- Why James chose writing
- The heights of success
- Family
- Balance

22 CLOSING

“

Do NOT sit there like 'Oh I don't feel like it today. I don't feel like it tomorrow'. Feel like it! Do it! Force yourself. —James Patterson

“

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Get your friends to support your new project. Post your intentions on social media and update your status regularly over the course of the class. Identify a few interested friends who would be willing to provide feedback. We'd love to see your progress too! Share your status with us on Twitter and Facebook @MasterClass.

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ James became a great writer by making time everyday before work to simply sit down and *write*. He encourages an hour every day, but we'd recommend you start with a number of words. Try writing just 500 words a day, work up to 1000, and then start timing yourself! Fill in the calendar on the next page with a schedule that works for you (eg. Monday 5-6am 500 words). Focus and commit yourself to this new project.

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Keep the passion alive
- ▶ Love what you do
- ▶ Believe in yourself
- ▶ Endure rejection

NOTES

WRITING SCHEDULE

MONDAY	
TUESDAY	
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	
FRIDAY	
SATURDAY	
SUNDAY	

“

The more you know about, the more likely you are to combine things to make an idea that's striking. —James Patterson

”

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ This lesson includes a follow up video critique by James on his Office Hours page [here](#). You'll find the student assignments he's critiquing on pages 9 and 10 of this workbook.
- ▶ James mentions a favorite book about ideas from his advertising days at J. Walter Thompson. We've searched high and low and found it for you! *The Act of Creation* by Arthur Koestler.
- ▶ Having trouble coming up with clever book ideas? James references Arthur Koestler's theory that coming up with a fresh idea out of nowhere is very rare. More often what we do is put together disparate ideas that nobody has put together before. We love this idea and wanted to share a few tools we've found to help get your creativity flowing.
 - ▶ [Inspiration Finder](#)¹ A random generator which prompts you to go out of your comfort zone and find something unusual.
 - ▶ [What-if-inator](#)² An idea generator for possible historical outcomes. Eg. "What if Einstein lived at the same time as Napoleon?"
- ▶ Create a place to store your best ideas. We love a crisp notebook, a Microsoft Word or Google Drive Document, or a 3x5 card file. James uses a simple file folder. Having a dedicated place for your working ideas is crucial for collating and finding themes or plot lines to begin researching.

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Examples of raw ideas
- ▶ Where great ideas come from
- ▶ Try a different approach
- ▶ Write your ideas down
- ▶ But is it a book?

NOTES

1 http://chaoticshiny.com/inspiration_finder.php

2 <http://www.seventhsanctum.com/generate.php?Gename-whatif>

NOTES

- ▶ Write down three raw book ideas. They can be ideas you've been toying with for awhile, or ones inspired by this class. Store them in your dedicated spot for novel ideas. You'll be working with them more in the next lesson.
- ▶ Below are six raw ideas we received from students who have taken this class. Watch James critique these ideas in his Office Hours video titled:

CRITIQUE—RAW IDEAS ASSIGNMENT

SAMPLE 1 BY NANCY V.

An old man on death row for a murder he did not commit finally accepts his fate, after 40 years of appeals. Knowing he will be put to death the next day, he recounts the events of the fateful day that put him in prison as a young man.



SAMPLE 2 BY ALLEGRA H.

A young photographer seeks a fresh start in Panama. Breezy afternoons give way to a fight for her life, however, when she takes the wrong photo at the wrong time, embroiling her in a web of corruption, sex, and scandal.



SAMPLE 3 BY ERIC A.

A U.S. Army communications technician returns to Wisconsin after being dishonorably discharged. He finds work at a local paper mill to support him and his shortwave radio hobby. While listening late one night, he picks up a transmission from a former Soviet numbers station – a military espionage broadcasting tool that has not been active since the Cold War.



NOTES

SAMPLE 4 BY MALIA N.

Revenge is the deepest form of insanity, whether it is noticed or not. Unnamed female character; abused by her lover Dillon, now lives at her Grandma's house. Grandma is actually dead, and the unnamed female character—mentally ill narrates her story where she relives terrorizing thoughts and memories in her mind from her basement where she murdered Dillon with scissors.



SAMPLE 5 BY ALEX M.

Divorced Park Ranger stationed at the Grand Canyon befriends and accidentally kills a writer-in-residence staying at a cabin on the north rim of the canyon. He throws the writer into the canyon to make it look like a suicide and then sets out on the road with his adolescent son for their first, and final, vacation together, as the police unravel what happened on the night of the murder.



SAMPLE 6 BY JONATHAN V.

A professor of Egyptology, Dr. Amanda Walter, discovers pristine papyrus scripts of hieratic writings from 13th-century BCE Egypt that include seven mysterious mathematical equations. With the aid of an Assistant Research Professor of Mathematical Cryptography, Prof. Neema Gowon, and later, an expert on high-energy physics, Harold Grün, the equations are shown to be solutions, or correct calculations, to the problem of calculating “dimensionless physical constants.” The results of this discovery, which commenters dub “The Anubis Solutions,” lead to a boom of research, surreal technology, terrorism, and, ultimately, a transformation of the earth into an “oceanic chaos of smartdust.



“

Don't set out to write a good thriller. Set out to write a #1 thriller. —James Patterson

“

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ James explains the difference between a plot and a story by using an E.M. Forster quote. “The king died and then the queen died, is a story. The king died and then the queen died of grief is a plot.” Read more from Forester’s guide to writing, *Aspects of the Novel*.

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ The best plots are simply told. Using your favorite raw idea from the lesson 03 assignment, write a plot down in 3-5 concise sentences. James explains "*These are not things you write overnight...it's really hard to come up with a good idea.*" Don't worry if you don't finish this assignment before moving on to the next lesson. You can always come back to it.
- ▶ Successful plots make readers say "Tell me more!" James recommends tapping your most honest friends for their feedback on your plot ideas. Once you have your original plot condensed, call a friend and share the pitch. Pause for a moment and see if they ask for more. If they do, you might be onto something.

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Condense your plot
- ▶ Raise the stakes
- ▶ Create conflict
- ▶ Create worthy opponents
- ▶ Build in surprises
- ▶ Less is more

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Research really helps your confidence. —James Patterson

”

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ This lesson includes a follow up video critique by James on his Office Hours page [here](#). You'll find the student assignments he's critiquing on pages 13 and 14 of this workbook.
- ▶ Here's an example from James's book *Invisible* that illustrates how his research on house fires helped enhance his writing: *"I reach the landing and pause again. Closing my eyes, I can see the licking flames from my dreams—'angel fingers,' the firefighters call them—snaking across the ceiling. The boiling smoke ripples like the surface of the ocean just moments before the second story erupts in flash-over, simultaneously igniting every flammable surface and turning the cozy home into a convection oven."*¹
- ▶ If you can't make it to Egypt or Antarctica for your location research don't sweat it. Here are two helpful resources for getting a lay of the land.
 - ▼ [Google Street View](#) lets you explore world landmarks, discover natural wonders, and step inside locations such as museums, arenas, restaurants and small businesses with 360-degree images. They've collected highlights from their comprehensive site.²
 - ▼ From Casablanca in Morocco to Koreatown in Los Angeles, if you're looking for names of local restaurants or places of interest near your location, *The New York Times* [36 Hours column](#) is a great place to start.³

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ James stresses the importance of finding chatty interview candidates and asking open-ended questions. Write down a few open-ended questions and try them out on friends or family. Are you getting the answers you were looking for? Are their answers surprising you?

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Seek inspiration
- ▶ Build your credibility
- ▶ Know your locations
- ▶ Conduct interviews
- ▶ Know your vocations
- ▶ Don't be a know-it-all
- ▶ No excuses

NOTES

¹ Patterson, James; Ellis, David (2014-06-23). *Invisible* (pp. 80-81). Little, Brown and Company. Kindle Edition.

² <https://www.google.com/maps/views/u/0/streetview?gl-us>

³ <http://www.nytimes.com/column/36-hours>

- ▼ James suggests you add questions during the interview that expound on the answers to your previous questions. Be an active listener, even if it means going off script. Begin researching your story by identifying and reaching out to two potential interviewees for character development.
- ▼ Looking for the perfect person to interview for your story? Tap your MasterClass peers. In the discussion section of this lesson, add your request for experts in various fields of work or with travel experience. Then search the requests yourself and see where you might be of service.
- ▶ Research two locations where your story will take place. Describe this place in four or five sentences.
- ▶ Try your hand at writing a short description of a parking garage, like James did here in his book *Honeymoon*.
 - ▼ "New York may be the city that never sleeps, but at four in the morning there are definitely parts that are barely awake. One such was the dimly lit basement of a parking garage on the Lower East Side. Buried five stories beneath the street, it was a picture of stillness. A concrete cocoon. The only noise was the numbing buzz of the fluorescent lighting overhead."⁴
- ▶ Below are six parking garage descriptions written by fellow MasterClass students. Try your hand at editing these descriptions. What were the best parts? What didn't work and needs to be cut? Watch James critique these descriptions in the Office Hours video titled:

CRITIQUE—RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

SAMPLE 1 BY JONATHAN V.

Galvanized steel pipes ribbed its ceiling, between veins of frayed cable and concrete columns that crumbled under their yokes; stray clots of those veins hung, freighted with cobweb, like chandeliers. The dim cubic space was a lung with end-stage emphysema. For sixty-two years it breathed Ford and Mercedes, Mercury and Saturn, Ram and Jaguar.



NOTES

1 Patterson, James, and Howard Roughan. *Honeymoon: A Novel*. New York: Little, Brown, 2005. Print.

NOTES

SAMPLE 2 BY ERIC A.

Four stories of split concrete and missing exit signs. Potholes made parking impossible. Only weeds were left to patch the cracks.



SAMPLE 3 BY SHAWN W.

Sheets of rust-stained concrete provided underground refuge shelter from the city's swelter. The blinking fluorescent lights diffused barely enough light for cars navigating the garage's narrow avenues. Winding down to the lowest level, a beam of headlights were obscured from surveillance cameras above.



SAMPLE 4 BY ANDREW C.

A parking garage is an open area enclosed by cement walls, where people can park their cars while they run errands. Lines painted on the ground and walls indicate parking spaces, elevators, and flow of traffic. Typically, they're used for drug deals.



SAMPLE 5 BY MALIA N.

Bold colors and cold tile. Macho male's handy tools and stacks of plastic storage containers. Empty circus cars and dusty classic motor vehicles.



SAMPLE 6 BY NANCY V.

The gigantic, underground, concrete structure was damp and dimly lit. There weren't many cars parked and the ones that were there had seen its better days. It reeked of piss and homelessness; ironically, right under the red "no trespassing" sign, a homeless man had set up his home of cardboard boxes and dirty blankets



“

Don't think about the sentences, think about the story.

Write the story down. —James Patterson

”

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ At the beginning of lesson 06 James tells us that the most common mistake writers make is not creating an outline. He guarantees that making this a routine part of your writing process will make for a better and quicker book writing experience.
- ▶ Review the outline for *Honeymoon* that James has provided for you (beginning on page 45 of this workbook). We'll be referencing the outline for this lesson and elsewhere over the course of the class.
- ▶ As you begin to create your own outline here are a few things to keep an eye on:
 - ▼ Notice the rapid fire pace in the outline for *Honeymoon*. Each chapter is a scene, and each scene pushes the story forward.
 - ▼ Rather than focusing on snazzy sentences, James focuses on the core of the scene which propels his reader onto the next chapter. On page 24 of the *Honeymoon* outline James skips the sordid details and simply identifies the key actions. "*The suspense doesn't let up. O'Hara looks around outside the cabin. Her car is gone. Then the police arrive...*"
 - ▼ In the lesson 06 video, James explains the very basic needs for every outline. He will dive deeper into developing characters, adding more suspense, and editing in subsequent lessons.

LESSON 06 RECAP

- ▶ What your outline needs
- ▶ Focus on the story
- ▶ Begin sketching your outline
- ▶ Add more suspense
- ▶ Edit, edit, edit
- ▶ Try a character-focused approach
- ▶ Be thorough

LESSON 07 RECAP

- ▶ Outline for *Honeymoon*
- ▶ Troubleshoot your outline
- ▶ Step back and start writing

NOTES

ASSIGNMENT

NOTES

- ▶ Create a rough outline for a novel based on the story you started researching in lesson 05. You'll need a five to ten chapter outline to practice the skills you'll learn during the remainder of this class.
 - ▼ If you're having trouble getting started, James suggests trying a character driven approach. What happens to your main character in every chapter? During the editing and rewriting process you can go in and add secondary characters, subplots, etc.
 - ▼ Stuck on making your scene perfect? Get it the next time around. Write TBD and move on! As James does, you'll be writing and rewriting this outline multiple times.
- ▶ Refine your outline using what you learned in lessons 06 + 07.
 - ▼ In every draft, James layers on more suspense, more drama, and more twists. When he takes it too far he'll reign it back in, but he allows himself to be as creative as possible during the first pass.
- ▶ After you've completed your rough outline (take your time! James spends up to four months writing and editing his), share the finished product with a friend who was interested in the raw idea. Have them provide honest feedback and try to incorporate a few changes based on the review.

“

Do not torture yourself. That's how people get blocked.

—James Patterson

”

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ In this lesson, James tells us his key to warding off writer's block is to freight train through the first draft. Focus on getting the story down. If you get stuck or feel blocked write TBD on that chapter and move on. James sometimes has TBD written on two or three chapters in a row. Don't obsess about a single chapter or press too hard. If you're not getting it, it's ok to move on.
- ▶ We found an interesting study on listening to music while you write. If you enjoy listening to classical or other lyric-free music but find it distracting while you write, try turning it down just a touch. A study has shown that moderate to low music noise levels can increase productivity, but anything over 85 decibels can decrease your creativity.¹
- ▶ After learning about James's daily routine, we thought it'd be interesting to see how other artists and creatives spend their time.
 - ▼ The book *Daily Rituals: How Artists Work* by Mason Curry outlines the habits of nearly 200 creatives.
 - ▼ In this fascinating [BrainPickings.org](http://www.brainpickings.org/2012/11/20/daily-routines-writers/) article 15 great writers spell out their daily routines.²
 - ▼ Wonder where some of your favorite writers write? This [New York Times Magazine](http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/03/25/writers-room-tom-mccarthy-rachel-kushner-paul-muldoon/?h-p&action-click&pgtype=Homepage&module=mini-moth®ion=top-stories-below&WT.nav=top-stories-below) article shares photographs and descriptions of where seven authors chose to spend their workday.³

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Freight train through
- ▶ How James writes
- ▶ Stay focused
- ▶ Take a break
- ▶ Take it seriously
- ▶ Practice, practice, practice

NOTES

¹ "Is Noise Always Bad? Exploring the Effects of Ambient Noise on Creative Cognition" Ravi Mehta, Rui (Juliet) Zhu, and Amar Cheema. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (December 2012), pp. 784-799

² <http://www.brainpickings.org/2012/11/20/daily-routines-writers/>

³ <http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/03/25/writers-room-tom-mccarthy-rachel-kushner-paul-muldoon/?h-p&action-click&pgtype=Homepage&module=mini-moth®ion=top-stories-below&WT.nav=top-stories-below>

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Set a timer for 30 minutes and start writing down what has happened during your day so far. When the timer goes off, take note of the things that distracted you (thoughts, noises, interruptions etc.) and research ways that you can effectively remove those distractions from your writing practice. For example, is your computer distracting you from your writing? You can try going completely analog like James, who uses a pencil and yellow legal pad to write his novels, but what about just turning off your WiFi or unplugging your Ethernet cable? Was it just the internet that was your distraction?
- ▶ Try the same 30 minute challenge a day later, removing the distractions you discovered the day before. Repeat the process until you've found your ideal writing space.

NOTES

“

You want your readers to have strong feelings about your characters. —James Patterson

”

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ This lesson includes a follow up video critique by James on his Office Hours page [here](#). You'll find the student assignments he's critiquing on page 20 of this workbook.
- ▶ Think about your favorite fictional characters, heroes, and villains. (Need a refresher? Here's a list of the 100 Best Characters in Fiction since 1900 from *Book Magazine*)¹. Make a list of your top five favorite characters and define five character traits for each. For example:
 - ▼ Humbert Humbert (*Lolita*) — **Distinguished**, self-loathing, lustful, predatory, desperate
 - ▼ Harry Potter (Harry Potter Series) — Orphan, modest, loyal to the end, **brave**, irritable
 - ▼ Hannibal Lecter (*Silence Of The Lambs*) — Monstrous, brilliant forensic psychiatrist, serial killer, **refined gentleman**, lack of conscience
 - ▼ Willy Wonka (*Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*) — Dreamer Mischievous, mad scientist, **eccentric**, benevolent.
 - ▼ Jo March (*Little Women*) — Independent, tomboy-ish, blunt, **opinionated**, passionate
- ▶ With your list of characters and their attributes, choose your favorite trait in each (we've made our favorites bold). Are there any similarities between the characters? Write a few sentences explaining what it is about these traits that makes each protagonist/villain so memorable.

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ James explains 'With respect to characters, you want things that really dig deep and say a lot very very quickly, to get us interested in the person.' With that in mind, write a list of 20 traits for a new character. Then cross out 17 traits. Do the remaining traits still make for a compelling character?

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Who is your character?
- ▶ What makes your character tick?
- ▶ Make a complex hero
- ▶ Make a complex villain
- ▶ Make important secondary characters
- ▶ Create reader intimacy

NOTES

¹ <http://www.npr.org/programs/totn/features/2002/mar/020319.characters.html>

- Below are five lists that we've received from students who have taken this class.
Listen to James critique these lists in the Office Hours video titled:

CRITIQUE—CHARACTER ASSIGNMENT

ALLEGRA H.

- ~~1. Tattooed~~
- ~~2. Taciturn~~
- ~~3. Female~~
- 4. CIA reject**
- ~~5. Athletic~~
- ~~6. Arrogant~~
- ~~7. Cowboy boot-wearing~~
- ~~8. Well-educated~~
- ~~9. Brusque~~
- ~~10. Independent~~
- ~~11. Stubborn~~
- ~~12. Lonely~~
- ~~13. Lost~~
- ~~14. Superstitious~~
- 15. Hotheaded**
- 16. Transient**
- ~~17. Intrepid~~
- ~~18. Alcoholic~~
- ~~19. Determined~~
- ~~20. Texan~~

ERIC A.

- 1. Failed stint in U.S. Army – communications technician**
- 2. Shortwave radio enthusiast**
- 3. Shops at IGA specifically during weekdays to avoid crowds**
- ~~4. Wausau, WI native~~
- ~~5. Green Bay Packers fan~~
- ~~6. Raised Lutheran, left church at 17~~
- ~~7. Formerly engaged, now single~~
- ~~8. Unable to pursue college degree due to financial problems~~
- ~~9. Employed at local paper mill to make ends meet~~
- ~~10. Collects cassette tapes and vinyl records~~
- ~~11. Nearsighted~~
- ~~12. Lactose intolerant~~
- ~~13. Both parents deceased~~
- ~~14. Only child~~
- ~~15. Played cello in high school orchestra~~
- ~~16. Lives in small mobile home~~
- ~~17. Adept at shooting, despite eyesight~~
- ~~18. Cannot swim~~
- ~~19. Nearly flunked out of German class~~
- ~~20. Does not own a television~~

ALEX M.

- ~~1. Unemployed Tour Guide in Sedona~~
- ~~2. Daughter of famed local Mystic~~
- 3. Reluctant Mind Reader**
- ~~4. Epileptic~~
- ~~5. NRA Member~~
- ~~6. Corruptible Pacifist~~
- ~~7. Conspiracy Theorist~~
- ~~8. Envious~~
- ~~9. Eidetic~~
- 10. Polemical Graffiti Artist**
- ~~11. Volatile Teetotaler~~
- ~~12. Exercise Addict~~
- 13. Former Under 18 Knife Throwing National Champion**
- ~~14. Happily widowed~~
- ~~15. Barren~~
- ~~16. Underappreciated~~
- ~~17. Homeless~~
- ~~18. Superficially Surly~~
- ~~19. Demanding~~
- ~~20. Self-destructive~~

ALEX M.

1. To help her concentration while working on a difficult problem, she listens to Philip Glass's Egyptian-themed opera, Akhnaten.
2. She became interested in Egyptology after a dream she experienced in which she found herself "pleasantly confined in a dim, glittering tomb that smelled of myrrh and seashore."
3. Her "existential motto" is a quote from E.M. Forster, "We are evolving, in ways that Science cannot measure, to ends that theology dares not contemplate."
4. She refuses to eat dairy products and usually adds to this refusal a lecture on the dairy industry.
5. Six days out of seven, she wears vibrant Hawaiian t-shirts.
6. She lost her father, Benjamin D. Walter, in the last year of the Vietnam War.
7. She is the only child.
8. Every day, she wakes up at 6:20am—her "special dawn." And every night, she goes to bed at 10:20pm—her "special dusk." This is her strict sleeping schedule.
9. Her favorite book is *Childhood's End* by Arthur C. Clarke.
10. She considers herself "shorter than average," at 5 feet and 3 inches.
11. Her only child, her son Geb Walter, died by drowning in the California Aqueduct.
12. She hates the taste of wine.
13. She was adopted by a German couple in 1972.
14. She has a furtive and guilty fascination with doomsday prophecies.
15. When she was twelve years old, she found a dead cat on her walk home from school. Over a period of weeks, she would walk by the cat and notice its stages of decomposition. The dry and dusty environment semi-mummified the cat.
16. Her hair is curly and black—like her mother's hair.
17. She is single, and "not looking."
18. The only time that she was happy, she believes, was in October of 1987, when she got lost for two days in the deserts of the Sinai Peninsula. She thinks it is slightly unsettling that she felt happy under those extreme conditions.
19. Her hands remind her of two jellyfish.
20. She tried yoga for two weeks, then quit "on account of my self-awareness."

NANCY V.

1. Young
2. Female
3. Beautiful
4. Smart
5. Intelligent
6. Arrogant
7. Strong-willed
8. Driven
9. Poor
10. Impulsive
11. Strong
12. Chinese
13. Courageous
14. Kind
15. Elegant
16. Petite
17. Loyal
18. Lost
19. Outgoing
20. Stubborn

“

I need to feel as involved as I want the reader to feel.

—James Patterson

“

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ This lesson includes a follow up video critique by James on his Office Hours page [here](#). You'll find the student assignments he's critiquing on pages 22 and 23 of this workbook.
- ▶ Here are some of James's favorite first lines from his novels:
 - ▼ "To the best of my understandably shaky recollection, the first time I died it went something like this." —*Private*
 - ▼ "I have some really bad secrets to share with someone, and it might as well be you—a stranger, a reader of books, but most of all, a person who can't hurt me."
—*Confessions of a Murder Suspect*
 - ▼ "It's way too early in the morning for dead people."
—*You've Been Warned*
 - ▼ "I know things I don't want to know." —*Swimsuit*
 - ▼ "Early on the morning of December 21, 1992, I was the picture of contentment on the sun porch of our house on 5th street in Washington, D.C. The small, narrow room was cluttered with mildewing winter coats, work books, and wounded children's toys. I couldn't have cared less. This was home." —*Along Came A Spider*
 - ▼ "Let's see what she has in her medicine cabinet. I mean, as long as I'm here." —*Mistress*

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Favorite first lines
- ▶ Keep pulling the reader in
- ▶ Get your reader invested
- ▶ Involve the reader quickly
- ▶ Don't be afraid to rewrite

NOTES

[illegible]

NOTES

SAMPLE 4 BY NANCY V.

It started out as any other school day. Blair was running late, but Nate wouldn't get out of the bathroom. She was never sure if he was doing it just to annoy her or if he'd really needed to be in the bathroom. She shouts, "Nate, if you don't open the door this second, I am going to strangle you, then tell Mom I strangled you," as she pounds on the bathroom door. Nate opens the door with a smirk on his face, "Geez, someone woke up on the wrong side of the bed."



NOTES

Horizontal lines for notes.

11 WRITING DIALOGUE

“

Everything you write should be moving your story forward.

—James Patterson

“

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ This lesson includes a follow up video critique by James on his Office Hours page [here](#). You'll find the student assignments he's critiquing on pages 25—27 of this workbook.
- ▶ Heightening real dialogue ensures you won't bore the reader with chitchat they can hear anywhere. Here are a few tips to help you avoid ordinary dialogue:
 - ▼ Pay attention to how people interact the next time you're on the subway, in a cafe, or at a restaurant. What about their conversation was interesting? What parts bored you?
 - ▼ The next time you watch a favorite TV show or movie, turn on the closed-captioning and mute the volume. Read the dialogue between characters. Does it read as well as it does when you're listening to it?
 - ▼ Find the script of a popular film and read the dialogue without watching the movie. Does the scene resonate with you without the visual storytelling?

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Write dialogue (using no narration) between two characters using this prompt:
 - ▼ A man comes home from work early and his wife intercepts him in the living room. He doesn't want to tell her that he's just been fired; she doesn't want him to know her lover is in the bedroom.
- ▶ On the next three pages are four example of dialogue written by MasterClass students. Using what you learned in this lesson, try your hand at editing this dialogue. Listen to James critique these scenes in the Office Hours video titled:

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Example of great dialogue
- ▶ Heighten reality
- ▶ Reveal your characters through dialogue
- ▶ Do exposition the right way
- ▶ Compress time
- ▶ Move the story forward

NOTES

[illegible]

CRITIQUE—DIALOGUE ASSIGNMENT

NOTES

SAMPLE 1 BY SEAN C.

“You’re sweating.”
“Oh—I took a hot shower,” she said, retying the knot in the belt of her robe.
“It’s ninety degrees outside.”
“My sinuses have been bothering me. I thought the steam would help.”
“I need a drink,” he said.
“Bad day at work?”
“You could say that.”
He turned towards the kitchen.
“You want to drink here? Why don’t we go out?” She said.
“No—”
“Are you okay? What happened?”
“I’m fine. It’s just office politics.”
“I can see it in your face. Why don’t we go to Twigs? Get a nice dinner, a few drinks. You don’t really want to sit here drinking beer, watching Sports Center do you?”
She placed her hands on his chest, eyes looking up into his.
“I’m not in the mood to go out in public,” he said.
“We could go pick up a pizza.”
“I don’t want to pay for a pizza. Why don’t we just have some wine and the rest of your lasagna? I want to get drunk and spend the night in bed,” he said, reaching under her robe.”



SAMPLE 2 BY ALLEGRA H.

“William? Is that you? Christ, you scared me half to death.”
“When did my wife become so easily rattled?”
“Well you know there’ve been all those burglaries lately, and what are you doing home so early anyway?”
“Headache. Think I’ll go lie down.”
“Oh sweetie, would the couch do? I was reorganizing the closet and my shoes are spread out all over the bed.”

Handwriting practice lines for notes, consisting of 18 horizontal lines.

11 WRITING DIALOGUE

JAMES PATTERSON TEACHES WRITING 27

"I'll push them aside."
"It's really a mess in there—I'd rather you not see."
"Don't tell me you've been shopping again."
"When did my husband become such a Grinch?"
"It's the headache."
"You poor thing...always working so hard."
"I think I'm going to take that nap now."
"Wait! Let me make you some lunch first."
"I'm not—what was that noise?"
"What noise?"
"In the bedroom. I heard—"
"A burglar!"



NOTES

SAMPLE 3 BY JONATHAN V.

“You’re early.”

“You’re observant. I wasn’t feeling well.”

“My poor sweet. Sit down for a second. Let me get you—water?”

“Water’s good, yeah. I need to go lie down.”

“Hold on. Do you need to go to the hospital?”

“No, nothing like that. This isn’t a two-thousand-dollar headache.”

“It’s only a fifty dollar co-pay with your employer’s insurance. I’ll pay the fifty dollars, my sweet. We should make sure it isn’t anything more serious.”

“I’d feel bad charging my employer’s insurance for a headache and stomach ache.”

“You don’t understand health insurance. I think you’ve earned the luxury of one doctor’s visit a year.”

“I’ll just lie down. It’ll pass.”

“Do it for me. I care about your health.”

“Maybe I’ll take tomorrow off work. That should help. I’ll do that.”

“If it’s so serious that you need to take tomorrow off, then you should see a doctor. C’mon. We’ll go to urgent care.”

“Let me think about it while I lie down. Thanks for the water, by the way.”

NOTES

“You’re welcome, my love. I’ll call your boss and let her know you’re taking tomorrow off.”

“You’re the loveliest, but I’ll call her. No, really, you don’t have to dial that.”

“It’s ringing. Just relax.”

“I need to ask her something. Here, hand me the phone.”

“I’ll ask her. What is it?”

“It’d be longer for me to tell you than for me to tell her. I’ll take it.”

“Hi, Susan? Hi, it’s Laura, Daniel’s wife. I wanted to let you—”

“Aacchh! My head! Aacchh!”

“Dan! What’s the matter, Dan?”

“I don’t know; it hurts! Laura!”

“What hurts? Tell me what hurts.”

“Help me!”

“My love!”

“Help me to the bed, please!”

“You need to go to the hospital.”



SAMPLE 4 BY NANCY V.

“Oh Hon., you’re home. How was your day?”

“Oh, you know the usual; another long day.”

“Let’s go grab dinner, I didn’t get a chance to go to the grocery store.”

“I’m tired, I just want to shower and relax. You know, I think I may take the day off tomorrow. Let’s just say in and order Chinese.”

“We always order Chinese, let’s do something spontaneous. Let’s just walk and see where we end up!”

“Anna, I’m tired. I had a long day, let’s just stay in tonight. I’ll play hooky and call in sick tomorrow. We can be spontaneous then.”

“You can’t plan to be spontaneous Frank, come on let’s go.”

“For Christ sake Anna, can I at least change out of my work clothes.”

“Hon. You look handsome in your suit, let’s just get out of here.”



—James Patterson

...The fact was, Nora loved being with Connor and Jeffrey equally. Which made her decision that much harder.

Which one was she going to kill?

First."¹

- ▼ Looking at the *Honeymoon* outline (provided on page 45 of this workbook) see if you can find which chapter James originally set this action.
- ▶ Though not for the faint of heart, James recommends watching the movie *Seven (Se7en)*, written by Andrew Kevin Walker and directed by David Fincher, for examples of rich and palpable scenes.

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ James recommends taking a story from your own life experience and writing it down. To get you started, use his technique for building a compelling scene by using your five senses. What do you see, hear, smell, taste and feel?
- ▶ In *Along Came A Spider*, Alex Cross narrates his own part of the story in first person; the other characters' stories are told in third person (this style is repeated in other Patterson books, like *When the Wind Blows*). Using your outline, choose a chapter to write from multiple perspectives, experimenting with both first person and third person limited.

NOTES

¹ Patterson, James; Roughan, Howard (2005-02-01). *Honeymoon* (p. 39). Little, Brown and Company. Kindle Edition.

13 WRITING SUSPENSE

“

In my opinion, one of the biggest secrets of suspense is setting up questions that the readers **MUST** have answered.

—James Patterson

“

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ This lesson includes a follow up video critique by James on his Office Hours page [here](#). You'll find the student assignments he's critiquing on pages 31 and 32 of this workbook.
- ▶ Good writers read. James still averages 50 books a year! In this lesson, James stresses the importance of knowing your genre well before you start writing. Get to know the suspense/thriller genre by diving into books by James's favorite authors:
 - ▼ George Pelecanos
 - ▼ Richard Price
 - ▼ Nelson DeMille
 - ▼ Michael Connelly
 - ▼ James Lee Burke
 - ▼ Dennis Lehane
 - ▼ Walter Mosley
 - ▼ Don Winslow
 - ▼ Sue Grafton
 - ▼ Gillian Flynn
 - ▼ Geore V. Higgins

ASSIGNMENT

- James says *'It's very logical and realistic for your protagonist to go down the wrong alley.'* Think of your first three chapters as a Choose Your Own Adventure novel. Write down two different possibilities for your third chapter. Call a friend and have them choose which version they're more interested in reading. How would this different turn for your character change the outcome of the plot itself? Would it be a correctable mistake, or would it change the story dramatically?

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Know your genre
- ▶ Intrigue your reader
- ▶ Keep raising the stakes
- ▶ Keep the reader guessing
- ▶ Don't reveal too much too soon

NOTES

13 WRITING SUSPENSE

JAMES PATTERSON TEACHES WRITING 32

- ▶ In one paragraph, describe a suspenseful scene. Call a friend, read him or her a scene. When you finish, did he or she ask you what happens next? If not, revise, and call another friend.
- ▶ Below are thrtwoee suspenseful scenes written by students who have taken this class. Using what you learned in this lesson, try your hand at editing these scenes. Watch James critique these scenes in the Office Hours video titled:

CRITIQUE—SUSPENSE ASSIGNMENT

SAMPLE 1 BY SHAWN W.

Leena Morales has never backed down from a physical challenge. At 25, she still harnessed the discipline and focus that carried her through record-breaking NCAA performances and catapulted her to this year's track and field Olympic trials. Leena could always trust her body, even during a highly speculated absence from the sport. She could trust the training that made her body strong and lean — just like the woman boldly staring back from photographs spread across her motel's cheap Formica table. If journalists hungry for a human-interest piece could round up long-buried photos of her birth mother, what else would they find? It was getting harder and harder to ignore her intuition. All signs mirrored what accompanied this morning's fan mail: DO NOT COMPETE.



SAMPLE 2 BY SEAN C.

During the first eight days in October, eight different men asked Agustin eight times for his wedding ring, each pointing at the plain gold band on his finger as he walked past them on the street. Each wore a nondescript suit, a business haircut, a clean shave. On the third day, while stepping up from the crosswalk onto the curb outside his office, he noticed that the man who asked for his ring wore a silver chain over his suit jacket and tie. “I’ll take your wedding ring,” the man said. When the police arrested Agustin in his home on October 9th, they found a thin silver chain, no thicker than a pencil line, spooled over his wife’s broken body.



NOTES

[illegible]

“

If you're going to write a bestseller...It's got to work for a lot of people. —James Patterson

”

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ Who wants to read through a whole book with a lackluster ending? We found this great article by Joan Acocella in *The New Yorker* which spoils the books whose endings you might not have liked anyway.¹
- ▶ Ernest Hemingway took alternate endings to the extreme. The 2012 edition of his novel *Farewell to Arms* includes 39 of his 47 proposed endings.²

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Think of every possible ending for the outline you started in lesson 07. Think through all of the character arcs and all of the subplots and let your imagination run wild. James suggests making a bulleted list. Then pick the most outrageous ending that works.
- ▶ Using your existing outline and the ending you've chosen, in three or four bullet points write down clues you can give your readers about how the book will end. Add these to existing chapters if you feel that they wouldn't spoil the surprise.

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ What the ending needs
- ▶ Plant seeds along the way
- ▶ Favorite book endings
- ▶ Don't shy from ambiguity
- ▶ Think of alternate endings
- ▶ Analyze your favorite endings
- ▶ The secret to great endings

NOTES

¹ <http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/on-bad-endings>

² <http://www.npr.org/2012/07/22/156991302/new-edition-includes-39-different-farewells-to-arms>

“
Editing, polishing...It's the whole ball of wax.
—James Patterson
”

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ During the editing process, James is liberal with the red pen. Using the **Delete-O-Matic** tool located on the lesson 15 page, delete words and sentences from James Patterson's unedited writing samples. When you're done, compare it to the edits that James made himself. Note how the edits change the pace of the paragraphs and dialogue.

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Write the first two chapters of the novel you outlined in lesson 07. When you're finished, cut the word count by 10 percent. Then cut it by another 10 percent. Which is the strongest version?
- ▶ Begin editing your first chapters using James's advice on removing distractions and making sure every chapter propels the story forward. Share it with a friend a chapter at a time. Are they looking forward to reading the next one? Ask for their feedback on the pace of the chapters, the characters and the dialogue.

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Move the story forward
- ▶ Remove the distractions
- ▶ Edit the dialogue
- ▶ Keep the pages turning
- ▶ Stay positive during the edit

NOTES

16 WORKING WITH A CO-AUTHOR

JAMES PATTERSON TEACHES WRITING 35

“What’s great about working with co-writers is that you get two talents. —James Patterson

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ This lesson includes a follow up video critique by James on his Office Hours page [here](#). You'll find the student assignments he's critiquing on pages 35-37 of this workbook.
- ▶ Meet two of James Patterson's co-authors:
 - ▼ **MAXINE PAETRO** is an American author who has been published since 1979. Before working with James, she authored three novels and a biography. She has collaborated with James on the *New York Times* best-selling series *The Women's Murder Club*.
 - ▼ **CHRIS GRABSTEIN** is the Agatha and Anthony award-winning author of *The Crossroads* and *The Hanging Hill* as well as several adult thrillers and *I Funny*, a #1 *New York Times* bestseller that he co-authored with James.

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Now it's your turn to become a James Patterson co-author: Write a chapter using this outline James wrote for his book *Invisible*.
 - ▼ *'Emmy Dockery wakes in the middle of the night. Her small cottage on Chesapeake Bay is ablaze. Her room is on fire and she's about to be burned alive.'*
- ▶ Below is an example of a chapter written by a fellow MasterClass student. Using what you learned in this lesson, try your hand at editing the work. Watch James critique this scene in the Office Hours video titled:

CRITIQUE—CO-AUTHOR ASSIGNMENT

SAMPLE 1 BY JONATHAN V.

Emmy dreamt of faces in infra-red, invisibly dancing, in blackless dark...

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Looking for a great co-author
- ▶ When to begin the collaboration
- ▶ Make sure they know your voice
- ▶ Communication is key
- ▶ Encourage and coach them
- ▶ Put them in the scene
- ▶ Make it a true collaboration

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with ten horizontal blue lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or note-taking. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

...Then came the scream. Something in the kitchen with a kettle's shriek, something metallic. She plunged awake and found herself choking, gasping, and grabbing for her sheets to cover her from the hot, charcoal-colored smoke.

Her eyes seemed to boil, even beneath the sheet. She uncovered her eyes to search for an exit, but the boil intensified and the room was all billowing darkness. She could choose only to move away—not left, not right, not straight, but simply away.

Emmy felt her own movements as though they existed elsewhere, in some silent distance. The choking wasn't hers. The hands that searched the now alien surfaces of her room weren't hers. Nothing was hers. Only once, when her fingers tapped, with a thin ping, cool pane glass, was panic present. For the first one-tenth of a second of that ping, her nerves had relaxed—here was our window exit. In the next tenth of a second, it was panic that she might lock up, like a frightened doe, in her luckiest moment.

Her fist, wound in sheet, hit the glass. A shattering pain shot from Emmy's knuckles through to her forearm, but there was no shattering of glass. A second shock of pain, and for the second time, the window, somewhere in the darkness, wouldn't break. Emmy punched the window again and again. One of the countless punches broke the wrist of her right hand. Her dominant hand.

Gasping brought little relief; and soon, it brought no relief. There was no air, only smoke. Emmy felt the sheet around her face heating up. She caught herself from pulling the sheet away and sucking in the false air beyond it. She screamed.

This scream electrified her. The flow of moments parted and in that timeless opening, Emmy dreamt. Those infra-red faces returned, invisibly dancing a tranquil minuet of shock. They danced, Emmy thought, on invisible feet. Feet that kick.

With all the swimming lightness of her fading strength, Emmy kicked. The sound of shattering glass flooded her ears and her heart, like her lungs, took a small breath. She wriggled through the jaws of the broken pane. She could feel her skin opening up in long slices. She could feel the sting of fired air and wintry bay wind meet in her wounds. She could...

NOTES

16 WORKING WITH A CO-AUTHOR

JAMES PATTERSON TEACHES WRITING 37

...feel gravity pull her out and down and crash her into the sands of the shore. With her unbroken left hand and arm, Emmy grabbed at those sands and inched toward the waters of the Chesapeake. They glittered with the golden reflection of her cottage.



NOTES

Handwriting practice lines for notes, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

“

The best thing I can tell you, it's one word...Persistence.

—James Patterson

”

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ If you're searching for the best publishing houses to send your query letter, we've got you covered. Here are a few commercial publishing houses to look into:
 - ▼ Random House — New York
 - ▼ Hachette — New York
 - ▼ HarperCollins — New York
 - ▼ Penguin — London
 - ▼ Simon and Schuster — New York

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Write a query letter to pitch your novel to a publishing house. Start by simplifying your letter into three key elements to grab thier interest.
 - ▼ A hook - Refine the raw idea you wrote for the assignment in lesson 03.
 - ▼ A brief synopsis - Refine the plot summary you created for the lesson 04 assignment.
 - ▼ Personal bio - Don't be modest! Share your previous accolades, your education (if it relates to you writing), and any information you think the editor will find relevant to your novel
- ▶ If you're having trouble getting started, or have never seen a query letter, here are 23 letters that have actually worked.¹

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Publishing *The Thomas Berryman Number*
- ▶ Find the right agent
- ▶ Send query letters
- ▶ Don't give up
- ▶ Enjoy the victories

NOTES

¹ <http://www.adweek.com/galleycat/23-literary-agent-query-letters-that-worked/77310>

Nobody buys a book that they don't pick up.

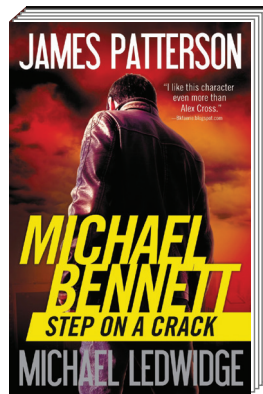
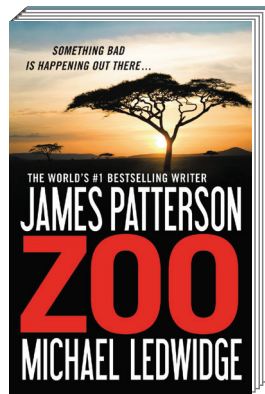
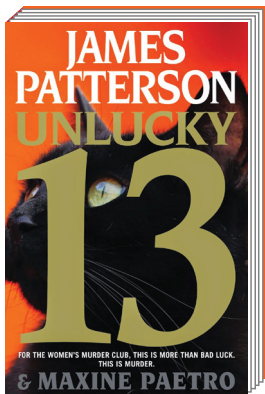
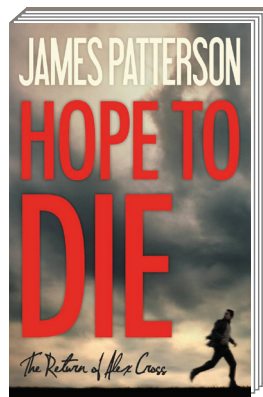
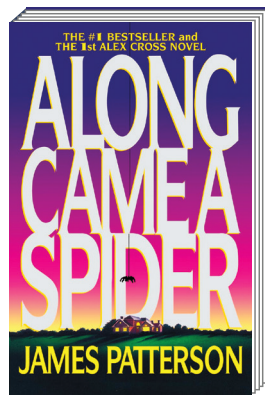
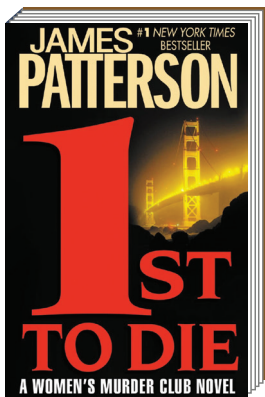
—James Patterson

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Favorite titles and covers

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ This lesson includes a follow-up video critique by James on his Office Hours page [here](#). You'll find the student assignments he's critiquing on page 40 of this workbook.
- ▶ Write a creative brief or sketch a book cover for your new title. If you're having trouble finding inspiration, take a trip to your local bookstore and identify the book covers that grab you. What is it about these covers that strikes your fancy? Try incorporating those elements into your design. Below are some of our favorite James Patterson book covers.



NOTES

[illegible]

ASSIGNMENT

► Look back at your outline from lesson 07 and craft three alternate titles for your novel. Below are titles submitted by five MasterClass students. Listen to James critique these titles in the Office Hours video titled

CRITIQUE—TITLES ASSIGNMENT

SAMPLE 1 BY SEAN C.

The Eight Silver Chains
Silverbound
Quicksilver



SAMPLE 2 BY ALEX M.

The Blade Under Fire
No Rest in the Red Rocks
Cut to the Chase



SAMPLE 3 BY JONATHAN V.

The Anubis Solutions
Dust
The Great House



SAMPLE 4 BY MALIA N.

Veronica's Revenge Part 1
Grandma's Secret
The Terrifying Testimony of Mental Disease and Murder



SAMPLE 5 BY ERIC A.

Patterns in Static Signal-to-Noise Ratio Broadcasters' Anonymous

NOTES

“

You gotta put something out there that gets their attention
and gets them curious. —James Patterson

“

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ Endorsements or blurbs from other authors and taste-makers in the industry bolster a new novel's sales by giving it credibility. Take a look at these blurbs that other authors wrote to help endorse James Patterson's most popular books.
 - ▼ "Deserves to be this season's #1 bestseller and should instantly make James Patterson a household name." — Nelson DeMile about *Along Came A Spider*
 - ▼ "No one gets this big without amazing natural storytelling talent — which is what James Patterson has, in spades. The Alex Cross series proves it." — Lee Child
 - ▼ "Alex Cross is a legend. He has thrilled us and kept us on the edge of our seats for twenty years now." — Harlan Coben
 - ▼ "Alex Cross is one of the great creations of thriller fiction." — *Dallas Morning News*
 - ▼ "Alex Cross is one of the best and most likable characters in the modern thriller genre." — *San Francisco Examiner*
 - ▼ "James Patterson does everything but stick our finger in a light socket." — *New York Times Book Review* for *Season of the Machete*

ASSIGNMENT

- James talks about the importance of grabbing people's attention with a great tagline. Write three taglines for the novel you outlined in lesson 07.

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Brand yourself
- ▶ Create a tagline
- ▶ Advertise
- ▶ Use social media
- ▶ Push your publisher

NOTES

[illegible]

“

Take the money. And run. And pray...That's the best advice I can give you. —James Patterson

”

TAKE IT EASY

- ▶ Sit back and enjoy as James shares entertaining stories from his adventures in Hollywood.

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ How it starts
- ▶ How it works
- ▶ *Kiss The Girls*
- ▶ *Alex Cross*
- ▶ *The Simpsons*
- ▶ Have a sense of humor

NOTES

“

I don't think I ever expected things would happen and
I still don't think about it. —James Patterson

“

TAKE IT FURTHER

- We asked James to share his favorite authors and books of all time with you. Here's the list:

FAVORITE AUTHORS

- ▶ Gabriel García Márquez
- ▶ James Joyce
- ▶ Günter Grass
- ▶ Evan S. Connell
- ▶ Joan Didion
- ▶ William Burroughs
- ▶ Jean Genet
- ▶ Ken Kesey
- ▶ Sylvia Plath
- ▶ Billy Collins
- ▶ Bernard Malamud
- ▶ Thomas McGuane
- ▶ Laura Hillenbrand
- ▶ Cormac McCarthy

A FEW FAVORITE BOOKS

- ▶ *Night Dogs*
Kent Anderson
- ▶ *The Ice Harvest*
Scott Phillips
- ▶ *Marathon Man*
William Goldman
- ▶ *Different Seasons*
Stephen King
- ▶ *Cutter and Bone*
Newton Thornburg
- ▶ *Where'd You Go, Bernadette?*
Maria Semple
- ▶ *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*
Brian Selznick
- ▶ *The Forever War*
Joe Haldeman
- ▶ *Dog Soldiers*
Robert Stone
- ▶ *A Fan's Notes*
Frederick Exley
- ▶ *The Book Thief*
Markus Zusak
- ▶ *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline*
George Saunders

LESSON RECAP

- ▶ Where it all started
- ▶ Why James chose writing
- ▶ The heights of success
- ▶ Family
- ▶ Balance

NOTES

[illegible]

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“

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NOTES

HONEYMOON

**BY JAMES PATTERSON
HOWARD ROUGHAN**

PART ONE

One

Interior decorator, Nora Sinclair, never met an open space she couldn't make beautiful. Including her empty suitcase. As she packs it to perfection with neatly folded clothes she hears a playful voice over her shoulder telling her not to go. It's Gordon Brown, her former client. And current lover. He's sexy, cocky, and a very successful investment banker. A boyish forty to her girlish thirty-five. "You travel too much," he tells Nora with a sigh. "This from a man with a million frequent flier miles," she shoots back with a smile. Nora and Gordon continue their quick banter, funny and loving. We like them. They're good together—and not just when they're standing up. A minute later the two engage in some terrific, earth-moving sex. It makes us feel great, horny, and envious.

Two

It also makes Gordon very hungry. So afterward, Nora cooks him a juicy burger that would do Smith & Wollensky proud. As they sit together in plush robes at the kitchen table of Gordon's Westchester estate, they gaze into each other's eyes. Gordon says he's never been happier, and Nora agrees. "Then what's stopping us?" he says. "You've already got more clothes here than I do!" Nora laughs. "Is that your idea of a proposal?" Gordon reaches into the pocket of his robe and removes a small Tiffany box. He drops to one knee. "No," he says. "*This* is my idea of a proposal." The ring is huge. It sparkles bright. And so does Nora. "Yes, yes, yes!" she sings out. "I'll marry you Gordon Brown!" They hug and kiss and celebrate with a bottle of Dom Perignon. "A toast to happily ever after," says Gordon. Soon, Nora's limo arrives. She laughs and shakes her head. "The best day of my life and I've got to go see a client. Can you believe that?"

Three

Late that afternoon, Nora arrives at a spectacular brownstone in Boston's Back Bay. On the doorstep, she removes Gordon's engagement ring and puts on another one. She lets herself inside, and then calls out from the foyer, "Avon Lady calling. You awake? You better be awake, Mr. Walker!" A tall, handsome man comes out of his den carrying a thick manuscript. It's Jeffrey Walker, former client and fiancé number two. He's in his late thirties, cerebral yet charming. A wealthy, best-selling author of historical fiction. Nora drags him back into the den and makes love to him on his favorite leather couch. The reader gets horny all over again. Nora and Jeffrey make a fantastic couple—it's a great relationship from the look of things. Après sex, Nora cooks Jeffrey a big juicy burger in her bra and panties. They talk wedding dates.

Four

That night, Nora lies in bed waiting for Jeffrey to fall asleep beside her. Finally, she hears that little whistling sound he makes. He's officially out. And up gets Nora. She tip toes down the hall to his study and sits down behind his desk. Under the dim light of a lamp she turns on his computer. Like a pro, she begins typing. Numbers and letters. Quickly and quietly. Just as she seems to find what she's looking for . . . Click! The room lights up. Jeffrey stands at the doorway in his boxers. "Nora, it's 2 A.M., what are you doing?" She doesn't flinch. "I'm sorry, honey. I couldn't sleep so I thought I'd check my e-mails." He shakes his head and smiles. "You never stop working, do you? You're worse than me. Now come back to bed." Nora says she'll be right there. As Jeffrey leaves she closes the file she was looking at. "First Bank of the Bahamas," reads the heading. What's Nora up to?

Five

The next day, Nora arrives home to Manhattan and her huge penthouse loft in SoHo. Its ultra-modern design couldn't be more different than Gordon's estate in Westchester or Jeffrey's brownstone in Boston. It's filled with the things she loves and collects—without concern for the needs of anyone else. Nora opens a bottle of pinot grigio and pours herself a glass. She unpacks her suitcase, making a neat pile for the dry cleaner. So meticulous. Then she takes care of some Man Maintenance. She places calls to Gordon and Jeffrey, saying just the right things to both of them.

Six

After her second glass of wine, Nora draws a bath. She slips into the soft, bead-laced water and rests her head back. Her eyes close. It's absolute bliss. But then her eyes snap open. There's shouting coming from the living room. Nora gets up and walks quietly down the hall, peering around the corner. There, a man and a woman are engaged in a heated argument. "You can't have her!" screams the woman. "Over my dead body will you come back here after all these years and take her away!" The man begins to laugh. "Over your dead body, huh? That I could live with." The woman, more irate now, storms over to a closet and removes a painted blue box high on the shelf. She flips it open and takes out a gun, her hands trembling. Then Nora watches in horror as her mother pumps three bullets into her father's chest. In the sudden quiet of the apartment, Nora begins to cry. Her mother turns and sees her. "Go back to bed, honey," she calmly tells her little girl. "It's all just a bad dream."

Seven

The phone ringing jolts Nora awake from her bath. Teary-eyed and a little dazed, she answers "Hello?" on the nearby portable. It's her best friend, Alison, confirming dinner that night with the girls. An hour later she meets up with them at Pico in TriBeCa. They eat, they drink, they laugh, they gossip. Nora's at ease now and it's clear that she loves her independence. What's amazing is how her

friends, who think they know Nora so well, hardly know her at all. And that's just how Nora wants it. She's always strategically forthcoming about her life—revealing little in a way that sounds like she's revealing a lot.

Eight

After dinner, Nora returns to her loft. She's buzzed but still in control. Always. She gets into bed with a scrapbook and flips through some newspaper clippings. A couple of stories and an obituary for a previous lover, Dr. Richard Hollis. "Top Doc Dies in Medicine Mix-Up," declared the *Post*. Nora closes the scrapbook as her thoughts turn to the new men in her life. Gordon and Jeffrey. She compiles a quick mental list of how much she enjoys being with them both . . . equally. The laughs, the sex, the very large lifestyles. It's such a tough decision. But with a nod of the head Nora makes up her mind. She knows exactly which one she's going to kill first.

Nine

The next day, Nora goes shopping for a client at ABC Carpet & Home. She may be an interior decorator with ulterior motives, but she sure does know her trade. Nora is clearly blessed with good taste and an eye for quality.

Ten

On a Friday at dusk, a Lincoln Town Car pulls into Gordon's Belgium block driveway. The hired driver steps out to open the door for Nora but it's Gordon who gets there first. He's that anxious to see her. And by the way Nora jumps into his arms and straddles him with her legs, the feeling would appear to be mutual. As the driver shakes his head and grabs Nora's luggage from the trunk, the two lovebirds are all over each other. "You're insatiable," Gordon says. "And aren't you the lucky one," retorts Nora.

Eleven

She didn't think she'd be quite so nervous. But it's been a while since Nora's done this. Mostly to ease her own tension, she lets Gordon take her to the bedroom and they have sex. Then she cooks him an omelet. She's really having butterflies. Before he even finishes his eggs, Gordon tells her that he's feeling sick, really sick. Nora has to help him to the bathroom. She makes him drink a fizzy concoction. Within seconds, Gordon violently convulses and dies right there in the bathroom.

Twelve

Nora leaves Gordon on the bathroom floor, goes to the kitchen, and fixes herself a stiff drink. She carefully washes out the glass that held the fizzy concoction with the poison she used to murder Gordon. Then it's showtime. Nora calls 911 and delivers a panicked, jumbled, and thoroughly convincing cry for help. When an ambulance arrives she is equally as compelling in person. No doubt about it. Nora is a great little actress.

Thirteen

As Gordon is pronounced dead on the scene, police arrive to file a report. Nora gives a command performance of grief and disbelief. "He had just proposed to me!" she sobs. The police listen with sympathetic ears, take their requisite notes, and have a look around. It's clear they don't suspect a thing, especially when Nora overhears a bit of their conversation. "Shit out of luck," says one of the cops. "The chick was this close to grabbing the brass ring." The second cop nods and stifles a smirk. "Yeah, and then the brass ring drops dead."

Fourteen

The EMS guys, the police, the morgue wagon—they've all left. Nora is finally alone in Gordon's house. Calmly, she walks to his study and boots up his computer. In no time she's logged on to a private numbered account at the "International Bank of Zurich." She types in Gordon's name and his seven digit

security code. “Desired transaction?” the screen asks. Nora clicks on the second box listed: TRANSFER. With a few more codes and access numbers, millions of Gordon’s untaxed and untraceable money is deposited in her own offshore account. Nora makes her second killing of the day.

Fifteen

The following afternoon, Nora is called by one of the cops who came to the house. He’s heard from the County Coroner’s office where an autopsy has been performed on Gordon. Congestive heart failure at age forty. What a tragedy.

Sixteen

Gordon’s sister flies in from Virginia for the funeral. Other than her, he had no other surviving family. The estate is settled. Naturally, Gordon’s last will and testament pre-dated Nora. Most of his assets go to the sister with the rest earmarked for charities. Poor Nora. She gets nothing. The sister, who at first feared Nora would contest, is now apologetic. She tells Nora to use the house a while. She’s in no rush to sell it. “And keep the furnishings. After all, that’s what brought you and Gordon together in the first place.”

Seventeen

Nora stands on the front steps of Gordon’s home and watches as his sister leaves for her return trip to Virginia. The woman is clueless to Nora’s game. As is everyone else. “No red flags. Only a checkered one,” thinks Nora, her heart racing with excitement. She’s one smart girl. And now an even richer one. “You’re my queen,” Gordon was fond of saying. Soon, in keeping with her grand plan, she’ll be living like a real one.

Eighteen

Nora turns to head back into the house but not before looking over at the hedges. She thought she heard something. *Click! Click! Click!* There it is again. She stares and sees nothing, though. Probably a bird, she decides. As

she takes the last step into the house the Nikon D1-X Digicam chirps one last time from its perch in the hedges. Yes, indeed. Nora Sinclair isn't the only one with a grand plan.

PART TWO

Nineteen

In a small insurance agency office, Craig Reynolds sits at his desk sifting through pictures of Nora from his digicam. The place looks kind of dismal, and so does he. He finally calls his boss, Susan, on his cell phone. He usually calls her a few times a day. "I need you to be a sounding board. So how do I sound?" he asks. He's speaking in a pretty thick New York accent. He tells her a very funny story, in which he uses a couple of different accents. "You'll do just fine," Susan says. "That's why we picked you for the job. You're an original and you have an excellent plan." Craig chuckles at her omission. ". . . Plus, I'm no longer on probation." "Yeah, that too," she admits. "Seriously, thanks for the vote of confidence, Suze." "Yeah, well, I'm still your biggest fan." We get that feeling.

Twenty

Nora visits her mother who is now at a psychiatric facility in upstate New York. Two nurses sitting at their station watch her arrive. The younger one, new to the ward, inquires about the mother's background. The older nurse, a long time staffer named Ms. Emily Barrows, fills her in. She explains that after the mother served her first few years in jail for killing her husband, she slowly but surely began to lose her grip on reality. Nearly thirty years later and she barely knows her own name. "That's nice that the daughter comes to visit, though," says the younger nurse. "I suppose," replies Emily Barrows.

Twenty-one

“Hello, mother,” says Nora. “It’s your daughter.” But unfortunately it could be the Tooth Fairy for all this poor woman knows. Still, Nora is very sweet with her. She brushes her hair and holds her hand. This side of Nora is so incongruous with her murderous ways and yet, given her childhood trauma, the reader begins to understand the paradox.

Twenty-two

Craig Reynolds is cleaning the lens of his Nikon digicam for the third time in twenty minutes. Revved up and impatient, he’s sitting in a BMW sedan parked on the street in front of Gordon Brown’s Westchester estate. Craig never did like stakeouts. Not back in the day when he was a rogue cop, and certainly not now in his new career. Finally, Nora arrives in a red convertible. Gordon’s Mercedes. He’s only been dead for two weeks but, hey, the car drives great. As Nora starts to unload some groceries, Craig quickly crosses the big front lawn and introduces himself. He manages the local field office for Centennial One Life Insurance. He says they spoke once on the phone, but she might not remember. She doesn’t. “What’s this about?” Nora asks him. “It’s about the 1.9 million dollar insurance policy on Mr. Brown.” Nora looks at him blankly. “You mean you don’t know about it?” asks Craig. She shakes her head. “Then you also don’t know this. You’re listed as the sole beneficiary, Ms. Sinclair.”

Twenty-three

Nora invites Craig Reynolds inside. She’s noticed that he’s very intense, and if he wasn’t such a bad dresser, and didn’t have such a heavy New York accent, he’d be kind of attractive. His car is pretty nice too. “I don’t understand,” she says. “Gordon had plenty of money and no wife or kids. He’d never bother with life insurance.” Craig explains that it was a policy provided by Gordon’s firm—a perk, and a fairly new one at that. “That probably explains why Mr. Brown put you down as the beneficiary.” Nora thinks for a moment. This certainly wasn’t part of her plan but for an added windfall of 1.9 million, she’s not about to

complain. "So when will the payout be made?" she asks. "Well, you see, that's why I'm here, Ms. Sinclair. There's a little bit of a problem."

Twenty-four

Nora doesn't like what she hears but doesn't show it. She begins to put away her groceries and Craig even helps out. He explains that while his field office services the policy (and was chosen on the basis of proximity to the client) it's the home office in Chicago that calls the shots. Says Craig, "The thing is, they've decided to investigate the claim because of Mr. Brown's relatively young age." He tells Nora that a man by the name of John O'Hara will probably be assigned to the investigation. "Supposedly, he's a hardass, but I'll see what I can do to speed things along for you." Nora is thankful. Craig Reynolds is bending over to be nice.

Twenty-five

The next morning, Nora is loading her suitcase into her newly adopted convertible. The color red suits her, she decides. As she closes the trunk she notices that guy from the insurance agency watching from his car. Rollins? No, Reynolds, she remembers. Nora walks over to him and Craig disarms her like a bomb squad expert—he's so incredibly nice. And he is cute. He says he has good news. John O'Hara, the man from the home office in Chicago, has definitely been put on the case but he said that there should be a resolution soon. Nora looks at Craig. "Is that it?" She's a little confused about why this guy came out to the house again. "I just thought you'd want to know," he says. He nods toward the convertible. "Taking a trip?" Nora tells him about having a client down in Florida and takes off.

Twenty-six

Craig returns to his car and calls in to his boss, Susan. He tells her that he's met the enemy and she's an incredible piece of work. Susan says, "If anybody can bring her down, it's you." That is definitely Craig's plan.

Twenty-seven

Nora's not more than two blocks away from having said good-bye to Craig Reynolds when she turns around. She's the suspicious type and knows that everything in this world is not always as it seems. Take her, for instance. Nora heads back hoping to catch Craig leaving. There's something not quite right about him. When she sees his car up ahead, still in front of Gordon's home, she pulls over. While waiting to follow him, she reaches for her cell phone and calls Jeffrey in Boston. Boggled down by another demanding client, she tells him. She'll have to delay her arrival up there until tomorrow. Jeffrey is disappointed. He shouldn't be. He gets to live to see another day.

Twenty-eight

This guy could really use some excitement in his life, thinks Nora. She tails Craig back to his office and then to a two-bit diner soon thereafter where he has lunch. Later, he drops some laundry off at the cleaners, returns a movie rental, and gets his oil changed on his car. That night, it's dinner in another two-bit diner and a bad foreign film at the art movie theater in Pleasantville. Craig's last stop is his condo in a nondescript complex. Nora watches him go inside and, after another minute, drives off. Satisfied.

Twenty-nine

Craig grabs a Coors Light from his fridge, sits down on his slip-covered couch, and picks up the phone. He dials. "What'd I tell you, Boss," he says to Susan the second she answers. "Nora followed me all day long." Craig stands and

goes to the window and takes a furtive peek out front. “Yeah, she’s gone now,” he says, taking another big swig from his beer. “Starting tomorrow it’s my turn!”

Thirty

The next day, Nora heads off to Boston. As usual, she travels first class. It’s a great way to meet interesting, wealthy men, and this trip would seem to be the perfect example. Sitting in the window seat next to her is a man named Blake Donaldson. Tan and wearing a collarless shirt, he tells Nora about his software company and how he took it public last year. “How exciting!” she tells him. Then she gets down to business. She talks innocently about reading an article that said a lot of savvy people were hiding money in offshore accounts. “Do people really do this?” she asks, with a convincing naïveté. “Guilty as charged,” whispers back Blake. Ten minutes later, she indoctrinates him into the Mile High Club. Blake Donaldson is officially next in line for Nora.

Thirty-one

Meanwhile . . . Craig Reynolds is following her. He’s sitting back where the wine comes in tiny bottles with twist-off tops. Coach. He’s been careful not to be spotted by Nora, donning a pretty decent disguise. This should get interesting now. What’s in Boston?

Thirty-two

Craig wonders who the man in the collarless shirt is getting a kiss on the cheek by Nora outside the arrival gate at Logan. “The guy sure looks happy, though,” he says to himself. Twenty minutes later, Craig is in his rental car following Nora in hers. A song plays on the radio: “Head Games” by Foreigner. Suddenly, in the Callahan Tunnel, he loses her. Or did she lose him? Craig slams his fist into the dashboard several times. He pulls over and calls Susan. “Fuck me, I lost her!” he says. He hangs up, gets out on the side of the road, and paces for a moment. Then . . . POW! He punches out a side window of his rental car.

Thirty-three

Nora isn't absolutely certain someone is following her, but she thinks so. Or is it just paranoia? She goes to the Back Bay apartment, where Jeffrey is working away on his latest novel. Somehow, somehow, she lures him to the bedroom. They work up quite the appetite.

Thirty-four

Nora cooks omelets, which she and Jeffrey eat out on the secluded patio behind the brownstone. They talk about how hard they both work and Jeffrey suggests a long vacation in Tuscany. "We'll rent a villa—better yet, we'll buy a villa!" he says. "After all, life is for the living." Oh, the irony. And oh, what a shade of green suddenly comes over him. Nora runs and gets Jeffrey a fizzy concoction. He drinks it and dies within a minute.

Thirty-five

Nora takes a moment to finish her glass of pinot grigio before stepping over Jeffrey to head inside and carefully wash out the glass that held the fizzy concoction and poison. Then it's showtime . . . again. Nora calls 911 and when an ambulance arrives, she's inconsolable. With this performance the EMS techies actually get tears in their eyes. Of course, Red Sox fans in Boston are rather used to crying.

Thirty-six

A couple of hours later and Nora finally has her privacy. She walks to Jeffrey's library and turns on the computer. While she waits for it to boot up, she pulls out a drawer from his partner desk. Underneath it is where he kept his codes. After a host of keystrokes, Nora hits 'TRANSFER' and sits back in the chair. In a few minutes she'll not only be able to buy a villa in Tuscany, but also a vineyard to go with it. She lets go with a devilish smile when suddenly a voice calls out from the hallway. "Is there anyone here?"

Thirty-seven

Shit! Nora anxiously gets up from the computer where Jeffrey's money remains in cyber-limbo. She goes to the door and practically runs into her unexpected visitor. It's Elaine Lippman, Jeffrey's editor. In tears, the middle-aged woman explains that she came rushing over after a reporter with a police scanner called about Jeffrey's death. "The front door was open and I—wait, I'm sorry, who are you?" Nora introduces herself, her voice cracking. "Oh, I'm so, so sorry," says Elaine. "This is just awful. I didn't mean to barge in on you at such a horrible time." Then Elaine shows her true colors. She's come with a blank disk to get the latest version of Jeffrey's manuscript. "It's what he would've wanted," she says. As Elaine makes a move toward the computer, Nora acts fast. And what acting it is. "How dare you!" she screams. "Have you no fucking shame?!" With a few more expletives, a cowering Elaine Lippman is shown the door. Nora's not about to be exposed by some crass book editor!

Thirty-eight

Jeffrey's funeral. The guy had more siblings than Gordon, but it just means that more people have no idea what Nora is up to. After the service, Jeffrey's accountant, a fidgety man, approaches Nora. He asks cryptically if his deceased client ever mentioned anything about having "foreign investments." Nora plays dumb and watches the guy squirm. He's powerless. As a supposed upstanding, law-abiding, financial advisor he too has to pretend he has no idea that Gordon was cheating the IRS.

Thirty-nine

Nora returns to Manhattan and the life she loves. She meets with a client, goes on a wild shopping spree, and touches base with Blake Donaldson—her man in the on-deck circle. He says that he'll be in the city the following week for a shareholder's meeting. They set a date to get together.

Forty

That evening, Nora meets her best friend, Alison, for drinks at the Cub Room in SoHo. They talk about men, dating, relationships, and love. As much as Nora wouldn't dare reveal her deadly secret, the way she discusses her feelings with Alison delivers some further insight into to what makes her tick. The reader, strange as it might seem, can't help but relate to Nora.

Forty-one

"Hello, mother," she says softly. "It's your daughter." Nora is back up at the psychiatric facility early the next morning where she updates her barely there mother on the happenings in her life. Fascinating is the way Nora makes cloaked references to Gordon and Jeffrey. "Doomed relationships" she says. As Nurse Barrows arrives with the noontime medication, Nora bids farewell to her mother with a sweet kiss on the forehead.

Forty-two

Nora returns to Gordon's estate in Westchester later that morning. There are two messages on the answering machine. The first is from a friend who owns an antique consignment business in Greenwich. That's where most of Gordon's furnishings will go. The second message is from Craig Reynolds who says he's got some bad news. "Please call me ASAP," he tells her.

Forty-three

Nora immediately calls Craig who says they should talk in person. It's about O'Hara. Nora offers to come by Craig's office later in the day. He points out that it's Sunday. He suggests the Tarrytown Diner. They agree to meet at one o'clock.

Forty-four

Craig Reynolds hangs up from Nora and calls his boss, Susan. "O'Hara!" Susan says when she hears his voice. Yep, Reynolds is O'Hara. "Tell me what's going

on. Is your big plan working? Have you caught the notorious Nora, or has she gone on and killed somebody else?" O'Hara talks to Susan and he has no New York accent. He's a very slick, very calculating. He's playing a part himself. O'Hara is an FBI agent playing the part of Craig Reynolds, a small town insurance broker. O'Hara is one hell of an actor too.

PART THREE

Forty-five

Reynolds/O'Hara takes a leisurely drive to the diner. The "insurance man" goes over his plan for Nora. He has a good idea what she's up to but he lacks a smoking gun. As it's been decided that a more detailed autopsy of Gordon Brown's body is needed, O'Hara will weave it into the sting operation on Nora. He'll use it to get closer to her and further gain her confidence. All the better when the time comes to take her down.

Forty-six

At the diner, Craig Reynolds seems embarrassed and a little nervous, almost as if he's suddenly on Nora's side in the insurance investigation. This goddamn O'Hara! he says. He's apparently contacted the FBI. Supposedly, the police have agreed to exhume Gordon Brown's body and perform tests on it. Nora can't believe it. Craig said he'd stop it if he could. "If I was O'Hara, I'd never do something like this."

Forty-seven

Nora and O'Hara. Two people wanting to get closer to each other in the name of one thing. Suspicion. This begets Craig agreeing to go for a ride with Nora in her convertible after the diner. Interestingly, they make a nice couple together. She really guns it on the back roads. Her skirt rides a little high on her thighs. She begins to tell Craig some background about herself, perfectly blending fact and fiction. She's kind of vulnerable suddenly, even a little sweet.

Forty-eight

Later that day, O'Hara is back on the phone with his boss, Susan. "She's the queen of half-truths," he says about Nora. "Not surprising given that our file on her is only half complete," replies Susan. The problem is that they can only trace Nora back to her college days at Brown where, fittingly, she was expelled for working as a call girl. O'Hara sighs. "Prior to that, Nora Sinclair is a ghost," he says. "If that's even her real name," adds Susan. She warns O'Hara to watch his step. She mentions a prior investigation, the one that put him on probation. As much as he doesn't want to hear it, he knows he deserves it. His transition from a follow-your-instincts cop to a follow-the-rule-book FBI agent has been anything but smooth. O'Hara can ill afford any more bumps in the road.

Forty-nine

Nora is back in Manhattan where she has dinner out with her hot new prospect, Blake Donaldson. He's handsome and he's charming. He's also something else. Full of shit. "I've got a little confession to make," he says after two bottles of merlot. "I'm not really a software mogul. I'm actually an advertising copywriter." Nora can't believe it. Not that he lied, but that he was able to fool her. She's used to being on the very top of her game. Blake begs Nora not to be upset and says he hopes she could like him for who he is—meaning, not rich. "Of course," she says with a twinkle in her eye. A minute later Nora excuses herself to go to the bathroom . . . *back at her apartment.*

Fifty

The police arrive with shovels one night at the quaint Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Westchester. There isn't anything quaint about Gordon Brown's body after several weeks being underground.

Fifty-one

Nora watches the macabre scene from a distance. This is weirding her out. She's also getting incredibly angry. While she can see Craig there with the local police, there's no one who could be O'Hara. "Who the hell does this guy think he is?!" she wonders. And just how much more trouble does he plan on causing?

Fifty-two

Two days later, Nora gets another message from Craig. He's got some gratifying news, he tells her. When she calls back he explains that the tests conducted on Gordon's body were negative. They showed no foul play. "So is Centennial One Life Insurance finally going to release my money?" she asks. He says they will as soon as O'Hara okays it. Nora begins to cry. Craig says, "Let me buy you lunch." "Will this come out of the 1.9 million?" "No, it's on me. I'm so sorry this is happening to you. I'm really sorry, Nora."

Fifty-three

The lunch is very nice, very cozy. They're both playing their head games. Afterward, apropos of nothing on this planet, Craig asks her if she wants to see his place? "Is this a test, Craig? Did you want to know if I really loved Gordon?" "Did you?" "Yes, I loved him so much it hurts." They go to Craig's place anyway. They flirt like crazy for a while. It's super-suspenseful. Then they go to bed. Nobody is any more shocked than O'Hara. Afterward, he's in his bathroom looking at himself in the mirror. "Well? Johnny? Now who are you, pal?"

Fifty-four

The seduction/cat & mouse game has really begun. But who's seducing whom? Who's the cat? Who's the mouse? O'Hara talks with his boss again. They're quite the humorous pair, actually. Susan is the best voice-over-only character in a decade. He tells her what's going on, but manages to leave out what happened with Nora at his apartment. Still, she warns him again, "Careful, O'Hara. Careful."

Fifty-five

It's all part of the job right? And he's the best. That night he takes Nora to the art movie theater in Briarcliff Manor. It's what Craig Reynolds would do, right? Then they go to her place—otherwise known as Gordon's estate—where they have their best sex yet. There's something about Nora that's irresistible. He's sure that she likes him. She couldn't be faking it, could she? Careful, O'Hara. Careful.

Fifty-six

The next morning, Nora coaxes Craig to stay home from work. They're getting kind of cute together. The two of them take the train to Manhattan. Nora gets him to try on and buy new clothes at the Polo store. He looks terrific. It's as if she's trying to spruce up Craig's image. Once a decorator, always a decorator. Then Nora takes him back to her loft. In bed, she attempts to get him to talk without the New York accent. Craig tries, but says it's too hard and that he's not much of an actor.

Fifty-seven

O'Hara returns to Westchester the following day and checks in at the Centennial One Life Insurance Agency. The place is just a front, staffed by FBI personnel. "Good morning, Molly Penny," he says, joking with his female assistant. O'Hara

then calls Susan to give her an update. All the while, he's looking at pictures of Nora from his digicam.

Fifty-eight

Nora, who has remained in Manhattan, meets up for dinner with her girlfriends. Later in the evening, when it's just her and Alison, she excitedly explains that she's met someone. Nora talks all about Craig and the rush of adrenaline he gives her. Who knew she could get that from a guy in insurance? "There's like this raw energy with him just beneath the surface," she says. "It's intoxicating!"

Fifty-nine

Nora calls Craig late that night. They have incredible phone sex. Those 970 numbers have nothing on these two.

Sixty

The next day, Nora wants the real thing. She returns to Westchester and calls Craig for an afternoon rendezvous. But he tells her that he's already got plans. "What plans?" she wants to know. He vamps. "Actually, I've got a seminar to go to. I'd blow it off but I'm one of the featured speakers."

Sixty-one

Nora doesn't know if she should believe him. She gets in her convertible and stakes out Craig's apartment. When he leaves in his car she follows, tailing him all the way to New Canaan, Connecticut. A ranch house on a ranch house street. She watches as the automatic garage door opens and Craig pulls in. Clearly, his house. "Some seminar!" she says, fuming. But she ain't seen nothing yet. Nora's mind is about to be completely blown. As she pulls closer to the mailbox she spies the nearly faded name on it. "O'Hara."

Sixty-two

Before Nora can decide what to do with this infuriating new development, the front door of the ranch house begins to open. With no cover for her easily recognized red convertible, she peels off. She drives back to Westchester and, in a fit of rage, breaks a few things in Gordon's house. She's besieged by so many unanswered questions. Why the set-up by O'Hara? Is there really an insurance policy? And what's with the sex—is that part of his plan? Nora decides it's time to get some answers.

Sixty-three

First, a little more domestic reconnaissance. The next morning, Mrs. O'Hara answers the door of the ranch house. There stands Nora. She's checking out the scene. Mrs. O'Hara is attractive enough and there are two little kids frolicking about in the living room. Nora says she's there to invite Mrs. O'Hara to join the Junior League. Mrs. O'Hara listens politely for a while then finally she says, "No offense, but fuck the Junior League." Nora walks away smiling. No offense taken. She mutters to herself, "John O'Hara—the cheating family man with the potty-mouthed wife."

Sixty-four

Next up, Nora pays a visit to the Centennial One Life Insurance agency in Westchester. It looks real enough and the "receptionist" couldn't be more helpful. Until, that is, Nora asks for a copy of Gordon's insurance policy. The receptionist stammers a bit and says she'll take a look through the file in the back. When she returns she says it must be at the home office. "Oh, that's right," says Nora. "Mr. Reynolds told me it was up in Hartford." The receptionist nods. "Then that's where it must be." Of course, as Nora well remembers, Craig had originally said the home office was in Chicago.

Sixty-five

Nurse Barrows looks up at Nora as she signs in. "Is everything all right?" the woman asks. Nora nods her head and lies. "Yes, thank you, everything's fine." It's morning and Nora, very much on edge, visits her mother. She continues her cloaked references but she cannot mask her emotions regarding O'Hara and his "betrayal." Nora is clearly besides herself.

PART FOUR

Sixty-six

Nora is back in Manhattan and back in her loft. She goes to her closet and takes a painted blue box down from her top shelf. Staring at it, she hears echoes of her father laughing at her mother that fateful night. It was so many years ago and yet it feels like yesterday. With her hands trembling, Nora slowly opens the lid of the box.

Sixty-seven

It's the next night. Nora is sitting in her convertible outside O'Hara's apartment in Westchester. She watches for a little while, then dials him on her cell phone. She invites him to her cabin on Candlewood Lake. He says no, he can't come as he's up to his neck in work. "Liar," she says. "I'm watching you." He looks out the window and sees her car parked. "Come on, Craig, you know you want to be with me. And I want to be with you."

Sixty-eight

The heat is on and the top down. Nora is flying. Music is blasting. O'Hara is wondering what he's doing in this woman's car, and why is it that part of him wants to be here? He has the weirdest thought he can imagine. He wants to

catch Nora really bad, but at the same time, he kind of wants her to get away.
So does the reader. Now where do you go with that?

Sixty-nine

The cabin is right on the lake and it's romantic, moonlit, the whole nine yards. Perfect. When they arrive, Nora is all over Craig. Then she pulls away from him. "I'm going to cook us dinner first."

Seventy

She puts on some romantic music, and she prepares omelets. She's a good, very enthusiastic cook, and she really is great with men—the best.

Seventy-one

While they eat, O'Hara asks Nora a few trick questions about the lies he knows she's told him, but that she doesn't know he knows. He plays it straight. So does she. Just about everything they say is ironic. And often funny. They're playing a really dangerous game here. Then Nora asks the most unexpected question of all. "Do you love me? Because I love you."

Seventy-two

Suddenly, out of nowhere, O'Hara is feeling deathly ill. This is the worst he's ever felt in his life. He rushes to the bathroom as Nora prepares her fizzy drink. Love hurts. And now it's about to kill.

Seventy-three

Nora tries to give him the drink but at the last moment he pushes her out of the bathroom. He shuts the door and locks it, quickly dialing 911 on his cell phone. He's scared. He's vomiting. His heart is racing beyond control. Nora bangs on the door. "You all right in there?" she asks. "You okay, O'Hara?"

Seventy-four

“That’s Agent O’Hara of the FBI,” he shouts back. The pain in his stomach is unyielding. He’s now beyond dry heaving and is coughing up blood. If he can just hold out for the police. “I know you killed Gordon Brown, Nora, and I know why. I also know about Dr. Richard Hollis in Manhattan way back when.”

O’Hara reaches down to his pant leg and removes a small pistol from his shin holster. “It’s over, Nora, I know too much . . . and I’m gonna live to tell about it.” Nora bristles. “That’s what you think, O’Hara!”

Seventy-five

The first shot just barely misses him. But the second shot finds flesh. As splinters fly from the door, blood gushes from O’Hara’s shoulder. He screams out in agony. “That’s my insurance policy!” screams Nora with a tight grip on her gun—yes, the same gun her mother used to kill her father. O’Hara hits the floor and fires three shots back at her through the door. Then . . . silence.

Seventy-six

Anxious seconds pass. O’Hara quietly, oh-so carefully, unlocks the bathroom door. He’s sweating bullets. Did the ones he fired hit their mark? Or are there more waiting for him outside the bathroom? Only one way to find out. Three-two-one, he counts down to himself before crashing through the door, ready to take down Nora once and for all. But she’s not there! Where the hell is she? She’s even scary when she isn’t there.

Seventy-seven

The suspense doesn’t let up. O’Hara looks around outside the cabin. Her car is gone. Then the police arrive. O’Hara’s cell phone rings. “You fucked with the wrong girl, O’Hara! Now I’m going to hurt you where you live . . . for real. Can you say New Canaan?”

Seventy-eight

The police rush O'Hara to his house in New Canaan. The lights are on. He barrels in to a rush of relief. Everyone's okay. The phone rings and O'Hara hits the speakerphone. She doesn't wait for a hello. "Good, I've got an audience," says Nora. "I just wanted to let you know, Mrs. O'Hara, that I've been fucking your husband!" Click! O'Hara looks at his wife. Actually, his ex-wife for about two years now. "And you wonder why we got a divorce?!" she barks at him.

Seventy-nine

O'Hara is sitting in his office—his real one—at Manhattan's Federal Plaza. He's stewing. It's been two weeks since Nora nearly killed him. His desire to catch her is matched only by his frustration in not being able to so far. All the planning and plotting, and nothing to show for it. Except, of course, a nice new 22 caliber scar on his shoulder. That, and an FBI disciplinary review board hearing the following week. *Hello*, suspension. Just then his cell phone rings. "I've missed you," she says. It's Nora! Calling from not-even-God-knows-where. "You'll be seeing me soon enough," says O'Hara. "I'll find you, Nora, trust me." She laughs. "You're so cute when you're angry." Click! O'Hara stands up from his desk and whips his cell phone against the wall. It shatters into pieces.

Eighty

The next day, O'Hara is sitting at his desk reading the directions for his new cell phone. He can't get his ringer to stop playing Beethoven and it's driving him crazy. His assistant, "Molly Penny" from the bogus Westchester office of Centennial One Life Insurance, pokes her head in. "Susan wants to see you," she tells him.

Eighty-one

O'Hara steels himself, then goes to see his boss. He's been on a strict diet of humble pie and assumes it's time for another slice. When he enters her office she's staring out the window with her back to him. Lots of tension here. She turns around. O'Hara's boss, Susan, is also his ex-wife from New Canaan. "There's someone I want you to meet," she tells him.

Eighty-two

Sitting in an FBI conference room, Nurse Emily Barrows is a little nervous. After all, she had no business using a call box to listen in on a patient's conversation. Not that Nora's mother was doing much of the talking. Barrows explains that just before the news broke about the interior decorator who was leaving a trail of dead rich guys, Nora paid one last visit to her mother. What was said proves to be the break O'Hara and Susan are looking for.

Eighty-three

Nora is with a man named Jordan Christopher at a beautiful inn on the beach in Barbados. It's absolute paradise. As they lounge in their spectacular suite, there's a knock at the door. Room service is right on time. A silver serving table is wheeled into the suite—champagne and caviar. The waiters are O'Hara and Susan. O'Hara says, "Hello Nora." Susan snaps, "Don't you talk to her, O'Hara! Don't you say another word." Then she looks Nora dead in the eye. "You're busted, you bitch." Then she looks at Jordan Christopher. "And you . . . you're the luckiest man alive."

Eighty-four

Come sunset that same day, Susan is relaxing on a beach chair at the inn in Barbados. Nora has been taken away by the authorities. O'Hara returns with two umbrella drinks saying that the kids are fine back home. As the two of them talk and laugh it's clear that reconciliation is in the air. O'Hara turns to Susan.

“This would be a great place for a second honeymoon, don’t you think?” She reaches over and takes his hand. “We’ll see, O’Hara. We’ll see.”

The End.